

## **Howard University Campus Plan Task Force**

### **MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

8 September 2010

6:30 p.m.

#### **Attendees**

Robert Brannum, President, Bloomingdale Civic Association  
Cate Costa, G.A.D.G.E.T Center  
Patrick Nelson, ECAC and Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH),  
ANC 1B Design Committee  
Sylvia Robinson, Exec Director, Emergence Community Arts Collective (ECAC),  
Georgia Avenue Community Development Task Force (GACDTF)  
Lawrence Guyot, LeDroit Park Civic Association  
Tony Norman, Pleasant Plains Civic Association; Chair, ANC 1B Design Committee,  
Georgia Avenue Development Task Force (GACDTF)  
Thomas Dawes, Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH)  
Danielle Ricks, LeDroit Park Civic Association  
Anita Rice, LeDroit Park Civic Association  
John Salatti, ANC 5C04  
Richard Myers, President, LeDroit Park Civic Association  
Maybelle Bennett, Director, Howard University Community Association

#### **Meeting Highlights**

The meeting focused on how the Georgia Avenue Community Development Task Force (GACDTF) recommendations could inform the University's campus master plan. Sylvia Robinson made the presentation, which was based on the feedback the GACDTF got from the community survey, the August 7<sup>th</sup> community meeting and other community engagement activities and meetings they sponsored. Copies of the presentation are available upon request.

In general, Georgia Avenue suffers from underdevelopment. This is beginning to change and the community wants to be in a position to have input into what that change looks like. The community survey of 690 people reveals the fact that preferences of respondents centered around safety and cleanliness.

Suggestions of the campus plan task force included:

1. incorporating Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) in the plan;
2. cleaning up Georgia Avenue Business Improvement District (BID), or Main Streets Program);
3. involving students;

4. preserving local businesses;
5. identifying how to make it safer, and measures the University can take to improve safety;
6. recommending that the University redevelop vacant buildings and parcels with mixed uses where local businesses might have reduced rents along with reduced rents for low-income households.

Mr. Guyot said that he doesn't want to be associated with a campus master plan that runs vendors off of the University's campus or results in the closure of 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **GACDTF Preliminary Recommendations**

Georgia Avenue development should result in:

**Employment Opportunities** (Model in Shaw developed by MANNA)

**Environmental Sustainability**-Solar Coops in Mt. Pleasant (Have HU students demonstrate how to take a row house and make it more energy efficient)

**Governance**-that unifies and oversees development initiatives, like the Main Streets Program (Needs to involve ANC, Councilmember; DCCH and the University)

Mr. Guyot thinks Main Streets Program is okay but there is a need to be as inclusive as possible.

**Housing** (More affordable housing is needed)

**Howard University Collaboration**- e.g. in the development of buildings, in the development of student and community-friendly retail; in the formation of a Howard University Neighborhood Corporation modeled after the example developed by Gene and Edgar Kahn. Under this model, HU students would do what Business Improvement Districts do and get credits they can use in Georgia Avenue businesses.

Mr. Guyot feels if GACDTF is organized it will gain strength. GACDTF needs to improve its organizing among Latinos, seniors and students.

There is additional community interest around:

Affordable retail (more family-oriented retail)

Small Business needs

Streetscape improvements

Youth activities and programming

Community Gardens (one exists in Pleasant Plains at Bruce Monroe, another exists in LeDroit Park at the former Gage-Eckington School site)

Tony Norman noted that at the community meeting held at the School of Architecture, a great deal of concerns were raised about preserving local businesses, the pressures of gentrification, and preserving neighborhood diversity.

Sylvia Robinson stressed the need to build programming for youth in the process, making them part of planning, programming, and implementation.

Youth must have employment also so they can afford activities. If not, they will just hang out.

Mr. Dawes asked what are the developers who are getting some form of public subsidy doing for the corridor? Also, how can the University's economic engine assist existing businesses?

Mr. Guyot suggested the University study the development in Columbia Heights, the downtown development district and the organizing that took place to achieve the temporary uses at Bruce Monroe, and learn the positive effect of community activism.

Danielle Ricks inquired whether businesses get involved in promoting cleanliness and safety. U Street is safe and clean. At Gallery Place there is no sense of safety even though you see police with vests. They don't make you feel warm and fuzzy.

Increasing façade improvements for existing businesses are taking place because of DCCH's business initiative on Georgia Avenue. G.A.D.G.E.T can help businesses complete loan applications.

Tony Norman said that in 1996, when the first discussion of BIDs took place, Georgia Avenue merchants feared the University would take over the BID.

Mr. Guyot advised that if the community wants businesses protected, they must make that clear to developers.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.